

45. The emerging role of maxillofacial prosthodontics beyond the realms of the maxillofacial region

Anup Gopi

Army Dental Center, New Delhi

The overall goal of maxillofacial prosthetic treatment is to improve the quality of life by reducing the morbidity associated with a treatment which benefits a particular head and neck condition. These prostheses were designed to be as similar as possible to the natural anatomy. However, their purpose today has extended beyond their primary role to cover, protect, and disguise facial disfigurements or underdevelopments. Maxillofacial prostheses today, not only replace lost structures of the craniomaxillofacial region, but restore form, aid in surgical procedures, reduce morbidity following surgical procedures and even aid in functioning. In other instances, these prosthesis may be indicated simply for cosmetic and psychosocial reasons or to position and shield facial structures during radiotherapy of the head and neck in cancer survivors. Maxillofacial prosthetics and materials used in their fabrication have today opened the window for a plethora of opportunities to prosthodontists in the service of mankind and also as an aid for our counterparts in the field of medicine, surgery and allied specialities. From simple surgical stents and splints, laryngectomy aids, tracheostomy and maxillectomy obturators, cranial plates, auricular prosthesis, ocular prosthesis and nasal prosthesis to breast and vaginal prosthesis to the present day commercially oriented body doubles, maxillofacial prosthodontics today offer a plethora of opportunities. This presentation highlights, both the less commonly used miscellaneous maxillofacial prosthesis and also the newer vistas open to prosthodontists today in the form of “redefining maxillofacial prosthodontics in a multidisciplinary role”.

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